

## **Quick Start Guide:** **NRSA F31 Style Fellowship in the Natural Sciences**

### **I. NRSA F31 at-a-glance**

#### **1. *What is the fellowship?***

- The NIH NRSA F31 fellowship is a multi-year funding opportunity offered by the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Specifically, the F31, along with the F31 Diversity (for minority students) and the F30 (for MD/PhD students) fellowships are awarded to predoctoral individuals who demonstrate high academic performance and have thesis projects that are of great relevance to specific NIH institutes that will be funding the fellowships.

#### **2. *Eligibility - who should be applying?***

- U.S. citizens or permanent residents
  - o Permanent residency status is not required while submitting, but it is necessary at the time of award.
- Ph.D. or equivalent research degree program
  - o Applicants normally range from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> year graduate students in the dissertation stage of their research.

#### **3. *NRSA F31 Page Guidelines/Checklist* – A necessity to getting everything completed!!!**

- There is a checklist at the end of this tutorial that has the page guidelines for a general NRSA F31 fellowship.

### **II. Additional Necessary Documents**

#### **1. *Biosketch***

- Personal statement
  - o Indicate why you are well suited for an award. Highlight your training/previous experimental work, your technical expertise, and your past performance.
- Positions and honors
  - o In chronological order, include any academic or professional honors with award dates (include awards from your non-degree training too!), along with current memberships in any societies.
- Contributions to science
  - o Include patents, papers, and conferences, along with any broader impacts or work in science.
- Scholastic performance
  - o List grades from undergrad and grad school.

## 2. Other necessary documents

- Facilities and Other Resources, Resource Sharing Plan, Equipment, Sponsor's Biosketch
  - o Documents your PI (or an older grad student) should already have
- Sponsor plus Co-Sponsor Information
  - o Document where your PI describes your training, potential, and merit
- Description of Institutional Environment and Commitment to Training- a new document that includes the old "Additional Educational Information" that you can get from your department or PI.
  - o Indicate how your institution has a strong program in your research area, along with listing key faculty members important to your development. Describe opportunities for enhancement of your career development and intellectual interactions.
- Responsible Conduct of Research
  - o Document from your department or PI. You can likely get it from your Director of Graduate Studies for your program
- Selection of Sponsor and Institution
  - o Indicate why your lab, why your program, why your university. *Sell it.* Describe the collaborative environment that you are in, how you have access to a vast array of resources, how your PI has successfully trained numerous individuals, how the dynamic in your lab and your program will ensure your success, etc.
- Applicant's Background and Goals for Fellowship Training
  - o A new document that combines the old "Doctoral Dissertation and Other Research Experience," "Goals for Training and Career," and "Activities Planned under This Award" documents
- Goals for Fellowship Training and Career
  - o Basically, describe what you want to be when you grow up. You *do not* have to give the stock answer of "I want to be a PI at a large research university," if that is not what you want. As long as it has to do something with science, mention it. Most reviewers will actually appreciate your ambitions and honesty.
  - o Mention how working as a graduate student will help to develop your *independent scientific thinking* (because this is true). Also, if you will be mentoring students, this is an important point to discuss.
- Activities Planned under This Award
  - o List all of your program requirements you have thus far completed (qualifying, TA'ing, courses, etc.).
  - o List estimated % of effort for each year of potential funding. For example, if you were planning on taking part in a teaching certification program, describe what the program entails/how it will benefit you, and then indicate that the program would probably take 10% of your efforts and that research would take 90%.

### III. Resources

#### 1. *The Yale Graduate Writing Lab (YGWL)*

- One-on-one consultations
  - Graduate writing advisors will work one-on-one with you to edit and polish your fellowships so they are ready for submission!
- Peer review groups
  - These small groups (up to 8 students per group), facilitated by a graduate writing advisor, begin approximately two months prior to the cycle submission date. Students provide and receive feedback on various fellowship sections. It is always nice to have input from others not directly in your field of research!
- Workshops
  - At the beginning of each submission cycle, a graduate writing advisor will host an informative workshop that covers the basics of F31 submission and will answer all and any questions you have!

#### 2. *Fellowship websites*

- NIH websites
  - <https://researchtraining.nih.gov/programs/fellowships>
  - <http://www.cancer.gov/grants-training/training/funding/f31>
- NIH/NIGMS sample applications
  - <https://www.nigms.nih.gov/training/indivpredoc/pages/predoc-f31-sample-applications.aspx>

#### 3. *Your PIs, committee members, peers!*

- Do not be shy about asking your PI for time to discuss ideas/different parts of your fellowship!
- Committee members may be able to provide you with different perspectives on your fellowship that may strengthen your overall research strategies. Set up meetings with them to discuss the aspects of your research with which they are most familiar.
- Older graduate students are often very willing to provide feedback on your fellowship or offer scientific writing tips. Do not be afraid to ask them for help!

#### IV. Checklist!

Document	Max. Length	Completed?
Title of Project	1-2 lines	
Project Summary/Abstract	1 paragraph	
Project Narrative	No more than 2 or 3 sentences	
Respective Contributions	1 page	
Cover Letter with Ref. List	1 page	
Specific Aims	1 page	
Research Strategy	6 pages	
Bibliography/Ref. Cited	No limit	
Background and Goals for Fellowship Training	Up to 6 pages	
Biosketch	Up to 5 pages	
Selection of Sponsor and Institution	1 page	
Facilities & Other Resources	From PI – up to 1 page	
Resources Sharing Plan	From PI – up to 1 page	
Equipment	From PI – up to 1 page	
Sponsor Biosketch	From PI – 5 pages	
Sponsor/Co-Sponsor Info	From PI – up to 6 pages	
Description of Institutional Environment and Commitment to Training	From DGS/PI – up to 2 pages	
Responsible Conduct of Research	From DGS/PI - up to 1 page	
Vertebrate Animals (if necessary)	From PI - up to 1 page	

\*F30s and F31 Diversity fellowships may require extra sections. Please check the NRSA website for details about these extra documents.